



Image One:

Jackson Pollock, (American, 1912-1956)

***Lucifer*, 1947 (Detail)**

Oil, enamel, and aluminum paint on canvas

41" x 8'

Collection Harry W. and Mary Anderson

Jackson Pollock was born in Cody, Wyoming in 1912. Throughout his childhood, his family lived on a succession of truck farms in Arizona and southern California. When he was sixteen, Pollock first studied art at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles.

In 1930, at age eighteen, Pollock moved from Los Angeles to New York City, settling in Greenwich Village. He immediately enrolled at the Art Students League, where he studied drawing and painting. In 1936 Pollock joined the Mexican Muralist Experimental Workshop, in New York, where he became aware of untraditional mediums and techniques that he later adapted in his large drip paintings.

In 1947–48 he devised a radically new innovation: using pour and drip techniques that rely on a linear structure, he created canvases and works on paper that redefined the categories of painting and drawing. Referring to his 1951 exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery, fellow Abstract Expressionist painter Lee Krasner, who was Pollock's wife, noted that his work "seemed like monumental drawing, or maybe painting with the immediacy of drawing—some new category."

Pollock's poured paintings are as visually potent today as they were in the 1950s, when they first shocked the art world. Their appearance virtually shifted the focus of avant-garde art from Paris to New York, and their influence on the development of Abstract Expressionism—and on subsequent painting both in America and abroad—was enormous. The words "poured" and "dripped," commonly used to describe his unorthodox creative process, which involved painting on unstretched canvas laid flat on the floor, hardly suggest the diversity of the artist's movements (flicking, splattering, and dribbling) or the lyrical, often spritual, compositions they produced. Pollock died in a car crash at the age of forty-four in 1956.

Action Painting—A style of abstract painting that uses techniques such as the dribbling or splashing of paint to achieve a spontaneous effect. In Action Painting the canvas is the arena in which the artist acts. The action of painting becomes a moment in the biography of the artist—the canvas becomes the index (record) of the event. Pollock was most associated with several of the Abstract Expressionist artists, though not all Abstract Expressionists were Action Painters.



Image Two:

Georges Seurat, (French, 1859-1891)

Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, 1884-86

Oil on canvas

81" x 120"

Art Institute of Chicago, Helen Birch Bartlett Collection

Pointillism—A method of painting developed in France in the 1880s in which tiny dots of color are applied to the canvas. When viewed from a distance, the points of color appear to blend together to make other colors and to form shapes and outlines. A famous example of this style of artwork is *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, painted by Georges Seurat.

Ask:

- Look closely at *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. What's going on in the picture? What colors and shapes did you notice first? Describe what you see.
- What time of day is it? What makes you say that?
- Does it look like people are enjoying themselves? Why or why not?
- Would you label this painting abstract, representational, or nonrepresentational?

Read:

Under a blazing midafternoon summer sky, we see the Seine flooded with sunshine, smart town houses on the opposite bank, and small steamboats, sailboats, and a skiff moving up and down the river. Under the trees closer to us many people are strolling, others are sitting or stretched out lazily on the bluish grass. A few are fishing. There are young ladies, a nursemaid, a grandmother under a parasol, a sprawled-out boatman smoking his pipe, the lower part of his trousers completely devoured by the implacable sunlight. A dark-colored dog of no particular breed is sniffing around, a rust-colored butterfly hovers in mid-air, a young mother is strolling with her little girl dressed in white with a salmon-colored sash, two budding young Army officers are walking by the water. Of the young ladies, one of them is making a bouquet, another is a girl with red hair in a blue dress. We see a married couple carrying a baby, and, at the extreme right, appears a well-to-do looking couple, a young dandy with a rather excessively elegant lady on his arm who has a yellow, purple, and ultramarine monkey on a leash.

Ask:

- Did you see all of those actions taking place in this painting?
- Do you think that the colors chosen affect the mood of the painting? Why or why not?
- Have you noticed anything else taking place by looking at this painting?

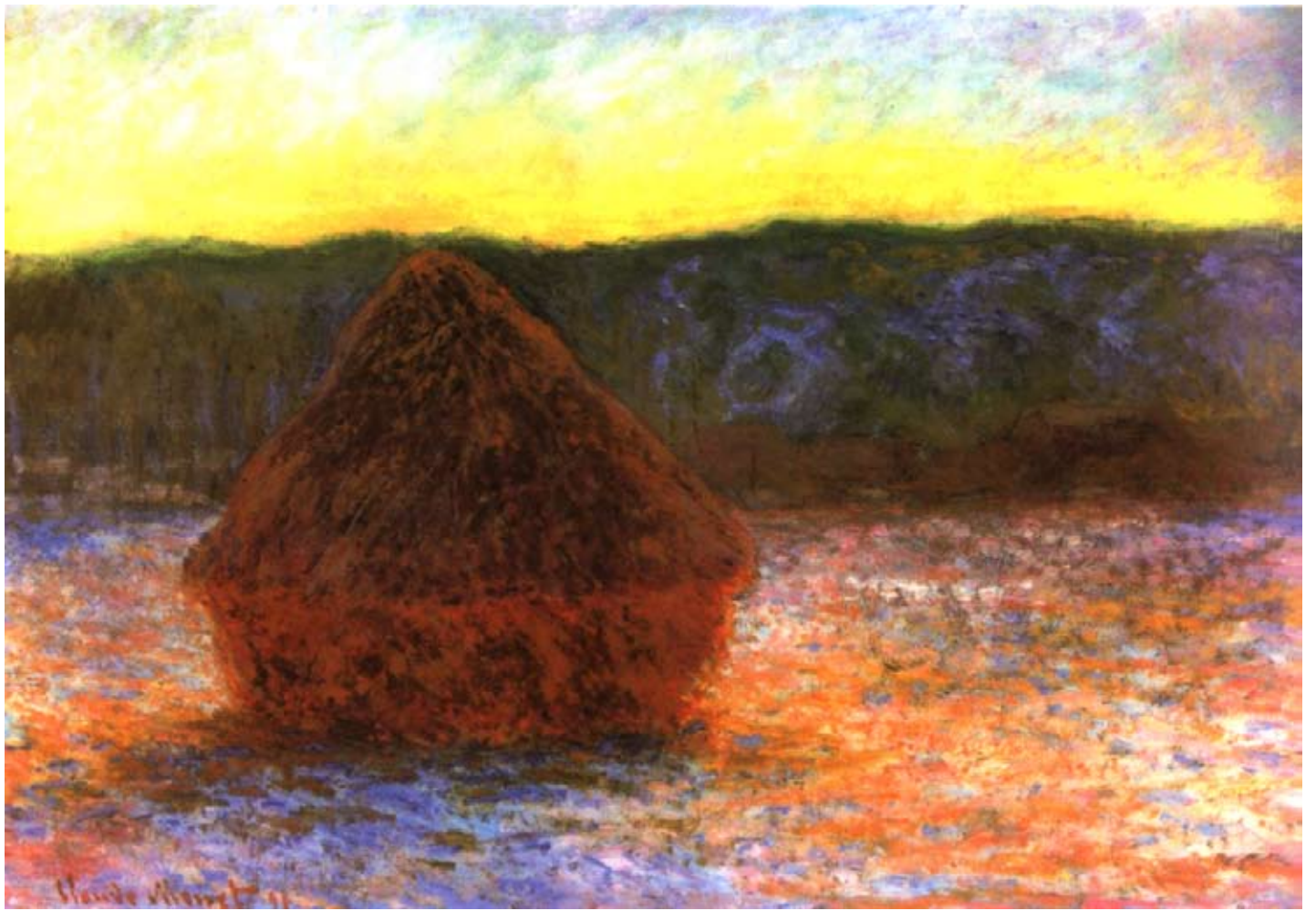


Image Three:

Claude Monet, (French, 1840-1926)

Plate 27

Grainstack. (Thaw; sunset), 1890-91

Oil on canvas

25" x 39 ½"

The Art Institute of Chicago. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Searle

Claude Monet was a successful caricaturist in his native Le Havre, but after studying plein-air landscape painting, he moved to Paris in 1859. He soon met future Impressionists Camille Pissarro and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Renoir and Monet began painting outdoors together in the late 1860s, laying the foundations of Impressionism.

In 1874, with Pissarro and Edgar Degas, Monet helped organize the Impressionists' group. During the 1870s Monet developed his technique for rendering atmospheric outdoor light, using broken, rhythmic brushwork. He received little abuse from public and critics alike, who complained that the paintings were formless, unfinished, and ugly. He and his family endured hopeless poverty.

By the 1880s, however, his paintings started selling; Pissarro accused him of commercialism, and younger painters called him *passé* (which is another word for old-fashioned), for he remained loyal to the Impressionists' early goal of capturing the transitory effects of nature through direct observation.

In 1890 he began creating paintings in series, depicting the same subject under various conditions and at different times of the day. His late pictures, made when he was half-blind, are shimmering pools of color almost totally devoid of form.

Ask:

- Look closely at Grainstack. What do you see in the painting? What is the subject matter?
- What time of day is it? What makes you say that?
- Name all of the colors you see.

Impressionism—An art movement and style of painting that began in France during the 1860s. Impressionist artists tried to paint candid glimpses of their subjects showing the effects of sunlight on things at different times of day. The leaders of this movement were: Camille Pissarro (French, 1830-1903), Edgar Degas (French, 1834-1917), Claude Monet (French, 1840-1926), and Pierre Renoir (French, 1841-1919).



Image Four:

Color Wheel

Color—The visual sensation dependent on the reflection or absorption of light from a given surface. The three characteristics of color are hue, value, and intensity.

Primary Colors—Refers to the colors **red**, **yellow**, and **blue**. From these all other colors are created.

Secondary Colors—Colors that are mixtures of two primaries. Red and yellow make orange, yellow and blue make green, and blue and red make violet.

Yellow + Red = Orange

Yellow + Blue = Green

Blue + Red = Purple

Complementary Colors—Colors opposite one another on the color wheel. Red/green, blue/orange, and yellow/violet are examples of complementary colors.

Yellow ↔ Purple

Green ↔ Red

Blue ↔ Orange

Value—Lightness or darkness of a hue or neutral color. A value scale shows the range of values from black to white.

Tint—Color lightened with white added to it.

Shade—Color with black added to it.

Hue—Refers to the name of a color (e.g., red, blue, yellow, orange).

Cool colors—Colors suggesting coolness: blue, green, and violet.

Warm colors—Colors suggesting warmth: red, yellow, and orange.

Neutral colors—The colors black, white, gray, and variations of brown. They are included in the color family called earth colors.



Image Five:

Wassily Kandinsky

***Improvisation 31 (Sea Battle)*, 1913**

Oil on canvas

57" x 47"

National Gallery of Art, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

The Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (Pronounced: Vas-ah-lee Kan-din-skee) painted this picture in 1913. During this time, Kandinsky's art was very bright and colorful. Try to count the colors you see in this picture. These are just a few of the many colors found in *Improvisation 31*.

Ask:

- Can you name any other colors?
- Can you find other examples? Which shape seems to be his favorite? Which is the hardest to find?
- Can you find a curvy line, a skinny line, a straight line, a wide line? What do you think this painting represents? Is there a subject, or is it just about colors, shapes, and lines?

Kandinsky has painted two boats in the picture.

- Can you spot them? The title suggests the boats are at battle. Try to find: a blue sail, cannons on the boat, a mast, a green ship, waves, a city falling in the distance. You may not be able to identify all these things, because in this painting, many of them are simply suggested.

Kandinsky wasn't trying to paint a picture of an actual sea battle. His work is abstract. It has some connection to things in the real world, but the shapes and colors have been distorted and adjusted so that the artist could convey a mood through his choice of color, brush strokes, painted lines, and shapes.

- When you imagine a battle, what colors do you think of? The same colors that Kandinsky used or different ones? He actually chose these colors very carefully. He believed strongly that every color was like an emotion or a feeling; colors could be happy, angry, strong, or sad. In this painting, both the picture and the colors express his feelings about the battle.
- Are there certain colors that make you feel happy? What are they? What colors make you feel sad? Can you explain why?



Image Six:

Forest Dickey

Timber Chest of Drawers, 2005

Reclaimed red oak barn timbers and steel

86"h x 16"w x 16"l

Forest Dickey is from Sauk Prairie, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Chicago in 2001 with degrees in Studio Art and Art History. After returning from teaching English in Asia in 2002 he enrolled in a furniture making class at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and has been pursuing furniture-making both professionally and academically ever since. He has worked in various shops in Colorado and New York, assisting both professional furniture makers and instructors. Forest is currently a third year Master of Fine Arts candidate in Furniture Design and Woodworking at San Diego State University. He expects to graduate in the spring after the completion of his thesis exhibition.

Forest mixes stylized architectural forms, reclaimed structural elements, associative materials, and methods of joinery, layering references to different types of buildings, the environments in which we find them, the materials they are made of and the objects that inhabit them. This work is a reorganization of form and materials from two different settings to create functional objects that are architecturally referential, evocative, and livable.

Ask:

- What materials do you think this artist uses to create his work of art? How many different types of materials do you see?
- Read title. Do you think this is a piece of furniture you would have in your house? Why or Why Not? What makes this a functional work of art? What things would you be able to place in the drawers?
- This work of art represents a structural building. Do you see the resemblance? Why or Why not?



Image Seven:

Dan Adams
Dog 2, 2006
Oil on canvas
8" x 10"

Artist's Statement

"The four paintings selected, (Dog 1 thru 4) are [a] continuation of my series of works using dogs as subject matter. They have evolved from dog "portraits" to (I hope) complete paintings where the subject matter and the handling of the paint, which is most important to me, come together to form the best painting that I can create. Currently I am using shadow and the entire body of the dog, sometimes in motion, and from different angles, in my paintings. The small size of the canvas (8" x 10") allows me to manipulate the paint with one brush and just a few gestures."

Dan Adams
November 28, 2006

Ask:

- Look at Images Seven and Eight. What is the consistency of style with Dan Adams paintings? Brush strokes, movement, color, patterns, etc.
- Which *Elements of art* are present? Color, Line, Space, Shape, etc.
- Do these images look similar or different? What makes you say that?



Image Eight:

Dan Adams
***Dog 4*, 2006**
Oil on canvas
8" x 10"